



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

200 E. Washington Street, Suite E-270, Indianapolis IN, 46204

Telephone: (317) 327-5090 ~ Fax: (317) 327-3446

June 6 , 2013

Manny Mendez
Director, Office of Finance and Management
200 East Washington Street, T2109
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: IMPD Property Room

Dear Director Mendez and Team Members:

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is reviewing components of DPS operations, budget, and administration and processes so that DPS can best serve the citizens' of our community. We deeply appreciate your willingness to contribute your valuable time and considerable skills to this important endeavor.

Your team leader has been given a statement of the goals and objectives for this team. Manny Mendez has been asked facilitate your efforts to accomplish these goals and objectives. A final report will be provided by your team with recommendations for IMPD's Property Room. Every effort should be made to reach a consensus. In the event a consensus is not reached, the majority recommendations are final, but the report shall record the dissenting perspective. A list documenting the members and their vote will be submitted with the final report. The report should include a plain statement of the problem(s), a summary of the team's conclusions and recommend concrete and measurable steps DPS can undertake to improve DPS's operations, budget, administration and processes. The appropriate department Chief will review the final report and prepare a plan and timetable for implementation of the final report's recommendations. After appropriate review, the team will receive a written response to their final report and recommendations.

DPS best serves its mission when it operates in a transparent, efficient, effective and fair manner on behalf of our employees and our community. I look forward to reading your final reports.

Very truly yours,

D. Troy Riggs
Public Safety Director
Department of Public Safety
City of Indianapolis



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Property Room

Background

Efficiency teams are being established to analyze and review key public safety functions and processes. Approximately 25-30 teams have been set-up and each team will have a mission and a set of goals and objectives.

Each efficiency team will be made up of representatives from the public, employees, labor, media and the council. The goal of each team is to improve methods of crime reporting and data collection while being as efficient as possible.

Mission

The mission of the Property Room Efficiency Team is:

- To review IMPD's processes;
- To review IMPD's policies;
- To review IMPD's staffing;
- To review storage facilities.

Team Members

The Team will consist of --- members, as follows:

1. Manny Mendez, Chair
2. Mike Medler-Forensic Lab
3. Valerie Washington –DPS Dep. Director
4. Pauli Irwin- IMPD
5. Theresa Bockbrader-IMPD Civilian
6. FOP Representative
7. Ron Reinking, Building Authority
8. Civilian

Staff Resources

Lori White, Director's Office



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Powers and Duties of the Team

The Team shall review and make recommendations on

1. Examine property room processes
2. Identify Best Practices
3. Consider Outsourcing
4. To hold meetings to discuss and ask for input from current stakeholders
5. To report to the IMPD Chief findings and recommendations for improvement.
6. Develop

General Operating Guidelines

1. After its initial meeting, the team shall meet upon the call of the chair or a majority of its members
2. The team will meet and begin its operations as soon as practical
3. General Team Timeline:
 - a. Meetings from January 27, 2013 – end of April 2013
 - b. Final report/recommendations by May 31, 2013
 - c. The timeline will be amended if the Team needs additional time to complete its work

Policy and Operating Guidelines

1. The Team Chair will call for consensus and will seek to identify common ground on policies, recommendations and issues as the team receives and processes data and information.
2. If the team cannot reach consensus on particular issues, they will be placed on a pending issues list and revisited periodically with an objective to reach a conclusion.
3. The Team Chair will do a recap and review of subject matter and policy discussion at each meeting.

Data

- Six Sigma Report

Property Room Team Members

NAME	EXPERIENCE/OCCUPATION	EMAIL INFORMATION	TEAM
Mendez, Manny	Chair	manual.mendez@indy.gov	Property Room
Medler, Mike	Forensic Lab	michael.medler@indy.gov	Property Room
Washington, Valerie	DPS Deputy Director	valerie.washington@indy.gov	Property Room
Irwin, Pauli	IMPD	pauli.irwin@indy.gov	Property Room
Bockbrader, Theresa	IMPD Civilian		Property Room
<i>FOP Representative</i>			Property Room
Reinking, Ron	Building Authority	ron.reinking@indy.gov	Property Room
<i>Civilian</i>			Property Room



IMPD Property Room Six Sigma

OFFICE OF AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE
NOVEMBER 8, 2012

Charter

Office of Audit & Performance
Indianapolis
Mayer Gregory A. Ballard



PROJECT OWNERSHIP

Project Manager: Hannah Bain **Champion:** Major Mike Perkins
Process Owner: Lt. Pauli Irwin **Mentor:** Manny Mendez

BUSINESS ISSUE

Possible inaccuracies in evidence storage, control, and disposal policies impact available property room space and can lead to the loss of cases, security risks, and lack of inventory control.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The current level of accuracy in the IMPD property room is X%. The IMPD property process is defined as property being seized/taken in, tagged, stored, accessed, and ultimately disposed of or returned to owner or sold. Accuracy is defined as the property process occurring in a correct, secure, accountable, and timely manner.

GOAL

Improve the quality of the property room process so that it is 98-99% accurate (OR cut the property room level of inaccuracy by X%).

BENEFITS

Net Benefit: TBD

Direct \$ Savings: TBD

PROJECT STATUS

Overall % Complete	00 %	Start Date	Completion Date	% Compl	Health
Define		10/1/12			G
Measure		10/22/12			G
Analyze					G
Improve					G
Control					G

SCOPE

Start: Evidence delivered to property room

Stop: Returning/selling/disposing of property

Out of Bounds: All financial property and cash is outside of scope because a separate audit is currently occurring.

ROADBLOCKS / ISSUES

Current property room staffing levels have prevented the meeting of a full team and postponed data gathering and process mapping opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

What	Who	When
Annex sampling	OAP Staff	11/14
Team meeting	Team	TBD

Team

- **IMPD**
 - Lt. Pauli Irwin (Green Belt)
 - Property Room Manager and 2 staff members
 - 3 Evidence Technicians
- **Prosecutor's Office**
 - 2 Deputy Prosecutors
- **Forensics**
 - Director of FSA
- **ISA**
 - Public Safety BRM
- **Public Defender's Office**
- **Sheriff's Department**

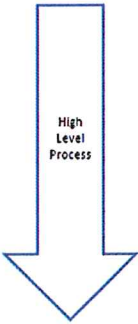


SIPOC

Office of Audit & Performance
Indianapolis
Mayor Gregory A. Ballard



Process/Project Name:	IMPD Property Room
Date:	September 19, 2012
Prepared By:	Hannah Bain
Notes:	

Suppliers	Inputs	Process	Outputs	Customers
Provider	Input Description		Output Description	Recipient of Output
Officer	Evidence		Sealed Bag	Property Room
Evidence Tech	Evidence		Sealed Bag	Property Room
Prosecutor	View/test		Access	Prosecutor
Defender	View/test		Access	Defender
Forensic Services Agency	Request to test evidence		Sealed Bag	Forensic Services Agency
Outsourced vender	Request to test evidence		Sealed Bag	Outsourced Vendor
Defendant	Request return		Goods returned	Defendant
Victim	Request return		Goods returned	Victim

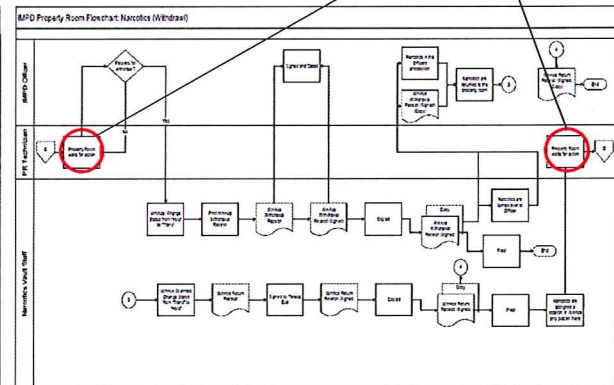
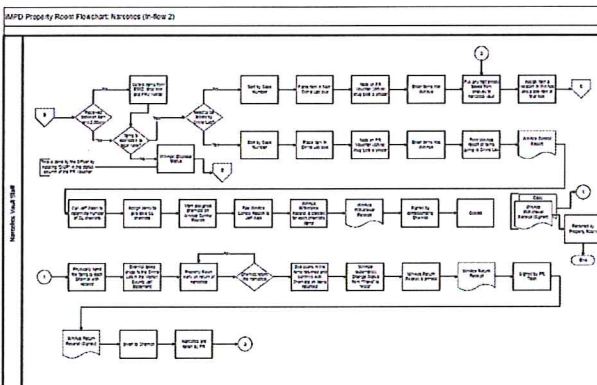
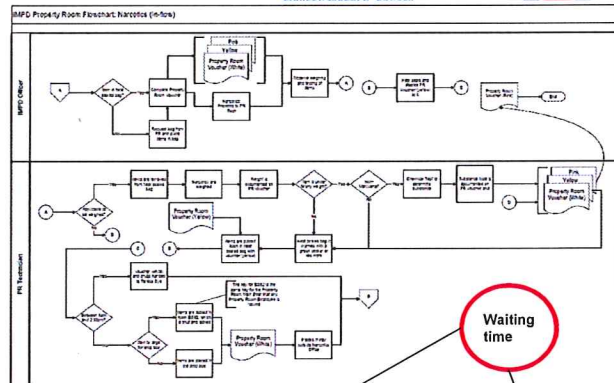
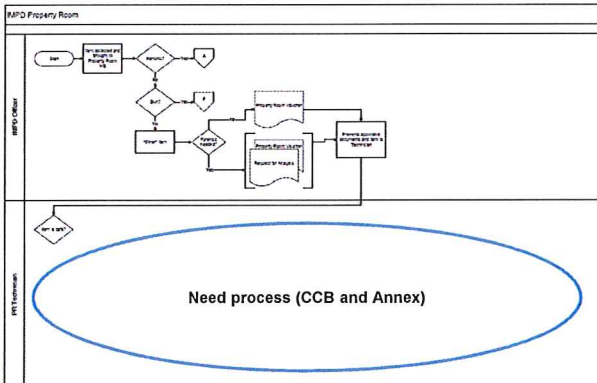
Start Boundary:

End Boundary:



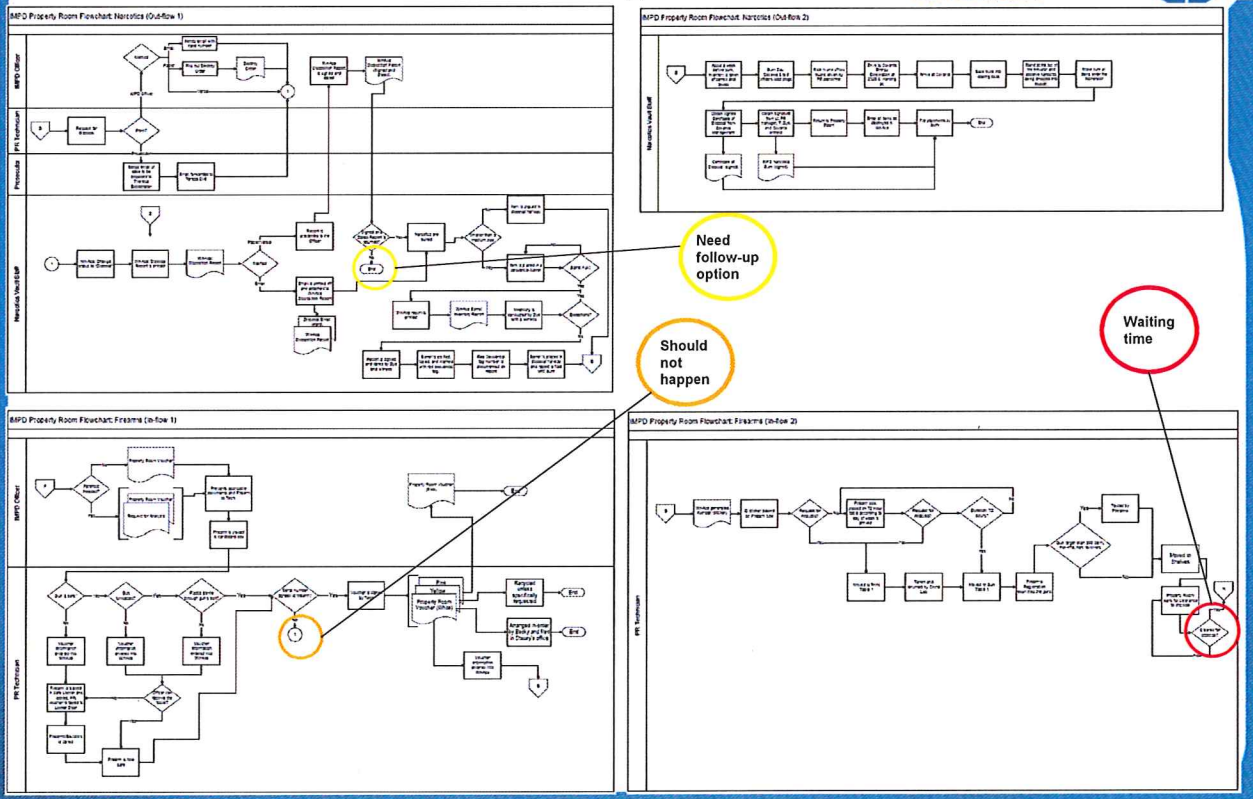
Initial Process Map

Office of Audit & Performance
Indianapolis

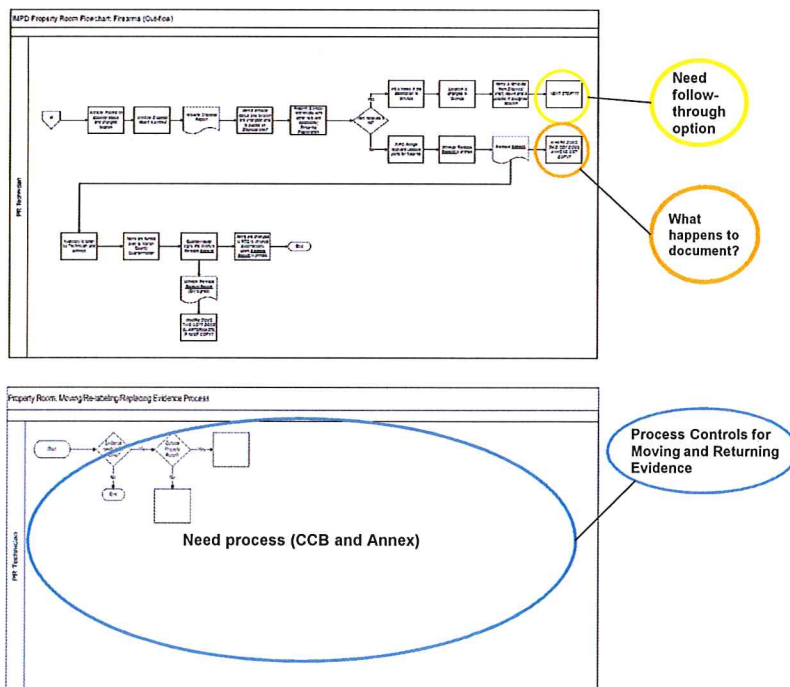


Initial Process Map

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Indianapolis
Mayor Gregory A. Ballard



Initial Process Map



Sampling



- Sample Size

- 380-piece sample size based on a population of approximately 400,000

- 180 items randomly sampled in CCB Property Room

- Sampled week of 10/22-10/26

- Approximately 6-8 hours

- 200 items in Property Room Annex

- Scheduled for 11/14

#	ACE Number	Item Location	Item Location Detail	Type	Other Information
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

- Technique

- Random documenting of evidence and location; compared against WinACE database system

Sampling



- Labeling
 - Verifying location labeling methods
 - Examples: NARCWW0; GNTBWED; EG28BACK
 - Shelf numbering
 - Verifying box/item labeling
 - Item number either not clearly marked or not visible in current set up
- Database-indicated location and actual location consistent (99.4%)
 - Annex testing still outstanding
 - One irregularity (#04001800 2)

Initial Observations



- Staffing
 - Inadequate staffing levels have delayed project
 - Limits proactive engagements
- Space
 - Inadequate space leads to health, accuracy, and security risks
 - Causes staffing constraints

Initial Observations



- Firearm disposal
 - Not occurring in a timely/efficient manner
 - 6% of total sample on disposal for more than 1 year
 - 7% of total sample has been on disposal for 5-12 months
 - 6% of total sample has been on disposal for 0-5 months
 - ***37% of all guns sampled are on disposal status***
- Database-indicated location and actual location consistent (99.4%)
 - One irregularity (#04001800 2)
 - Closed and destroyed in database; officer signed off that item was legally destroyed
 - Item found in property room

Initial Recommendations



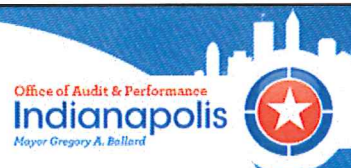
- Re-evaluate staffing levels
 - Consider hiring at least XX FTE for CCB location
 - Implement a policy for Annex location where at least 2 employees are always working
- Create and implement updated SOPs
- Pursue alternate spaces/locations for consolidation
 - ROC
 - Lentz

Initial Recommendations



- Partner with MCSD and IMPD Districts on a comprehensive gun disposal effort
- Update naming convention in database for Firearms Storage location
 - From “Bicycles” to “Firearms Storage”

Next Steps



- International Association of Property & Evidence (IAPE) resources
 - Ordering materials
- Team meetings
- Annex random sampling
- Further firearm review
- Active officer review
- Send out - through official channels - a call for officers to update evidence disposition (this will free up storage space)

PROPERTY ROOM ASSESSMENT

APRIL 27, 2012

BY, MAJOR MATTHEW L. HAMNER

I was asked by Director Carolin Requiz-Smith to conduct an assessment of the IMPD property room on April 19. I have attached a 27 slide power point presentation summarizing my findings. In addition, I will summarize the findings in this report. I toured all five property rooms and storage areas. I spoke with many of the employees and received valuable information.

As I started this assessment, the most glaring issues that stood out were the lack of standard operating procedures for the handling of evidence. This issue was exacerbated by the fact that none of the employees have any documented training in this area. The knowledge they have is passed on verbally. I asked the day shift supervisor how she trained new employees and where the training materials were kept. "She stated I just know it. I have been here almost twenty years." I did find an SOP that the IMPD has but it was not reviewed by the property room employees on a regular basis. The IMPD also has an SOP for the narcotics vault and a General Order regarding property and evidence control.

The general order has been updated and has met CALEA standards but is not departmentally approved yet. Planning and research submitted it to Lt. Irwin on March 21, 2012 and I have requested that it be approved. It is in the pipeline. The two SOP's will need reviewed by the Chief's office and should be reviewed by an evidence expert to ensure compliance with current evidence rules.

The five storage locations create undue burdens on the property room. Evidence and property is requested on a daily basis which requires staff to drive from location to location. This takes up many hours and is inefficient. We also run the risk of traffic accidents which has occurred in the past. The evidence could be damaged or lost. Sometimes this evidence is required in homicide cases. This just exposes the need for a large central property and evidence room that will support our police agency. Several of the storage rooms at the annex are not alarmed. If a break in occurred, it is very possible that we would not be aware of it until the next business day which would mean all the evidence in the room could be tainted and unusable in court.

The lack of storage is also a serious issue. The current space is currently full and busting at the seams and in many instances has created a hazardous work environment. If any large property seizures occur we will have no option but to store it outside or in an unsecured facility.

Officers many times do not follow the current guidelines regarding the submission of property and evidence into the property room. During my assessment, it became very clear that we need a director of the evidence and property room. The property room currently uses the WINACE computer program which is very efficient and used nationwide. The software is suitable and meets the standard. However, we need to obtain an electronic process of submitting evidence and property instead of the handwritten forms. This can be remedied immediately with funding.

Officers need to update disposition orders immediately. This would free up a large amount of space. Supervisors should do monthly checks on their officers to ensure compliance. The disposition orders can be processed on by paper means also. Regardless, a bulletin needs to be sent out immediately. I have already prompted professional standards and they are will have one ready for the Chief tomorrow.

Consequently, there is a training school sponsored by the IAPE (International Association of Property and Evidence). I am requesting that Stacey Krom, property room supervisor, be allowed to attend for training purposes. Also, I asked Director Medler to determine if this school would be a wise investment and he stated that it would.

By, Major Matthew L. Hamner

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPD PROPERTY ROOM

APRIL 27, 2012

Downtown Property Room



Improper storage of narcotics



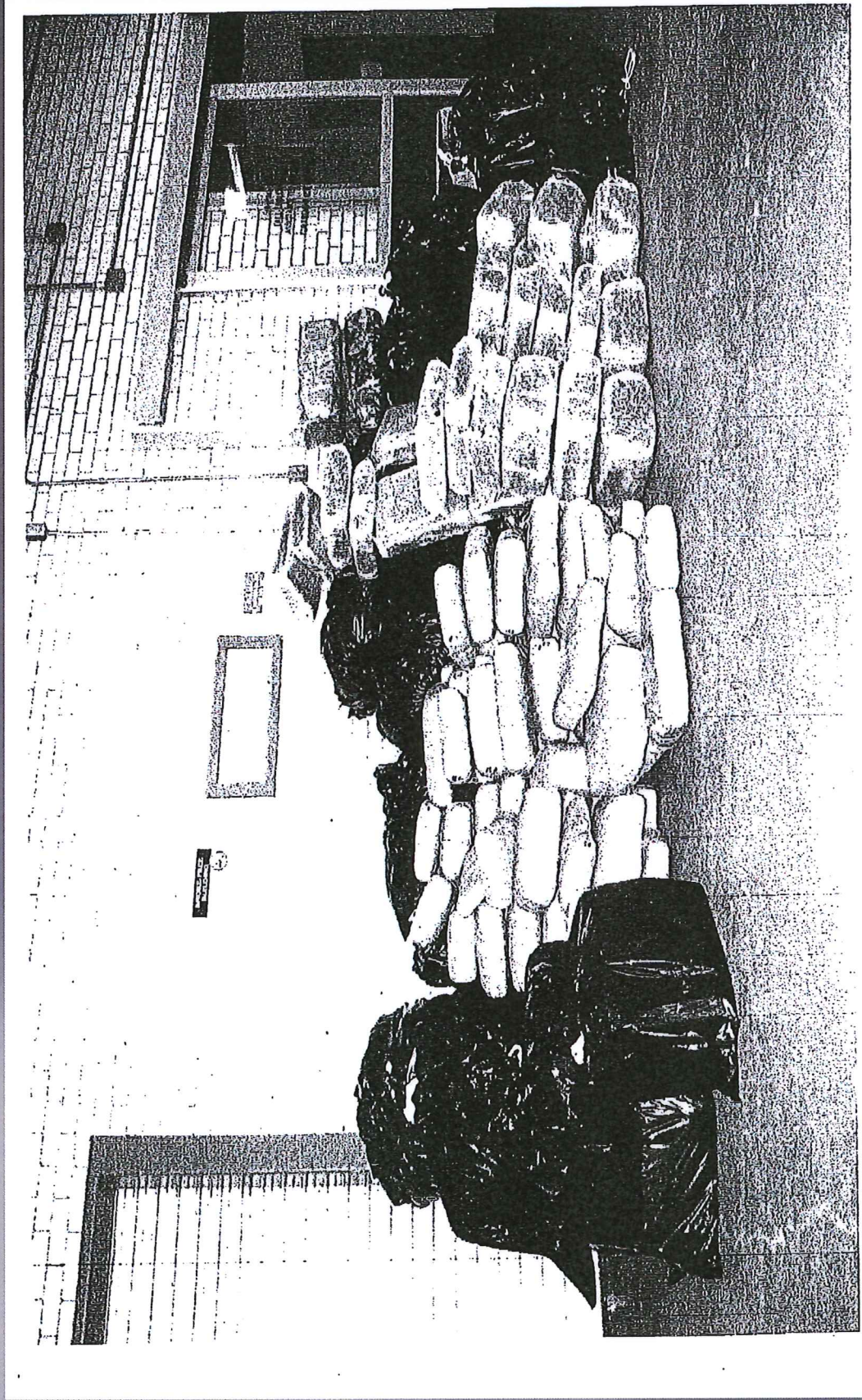
Guns Storage



Lack of Storage Room



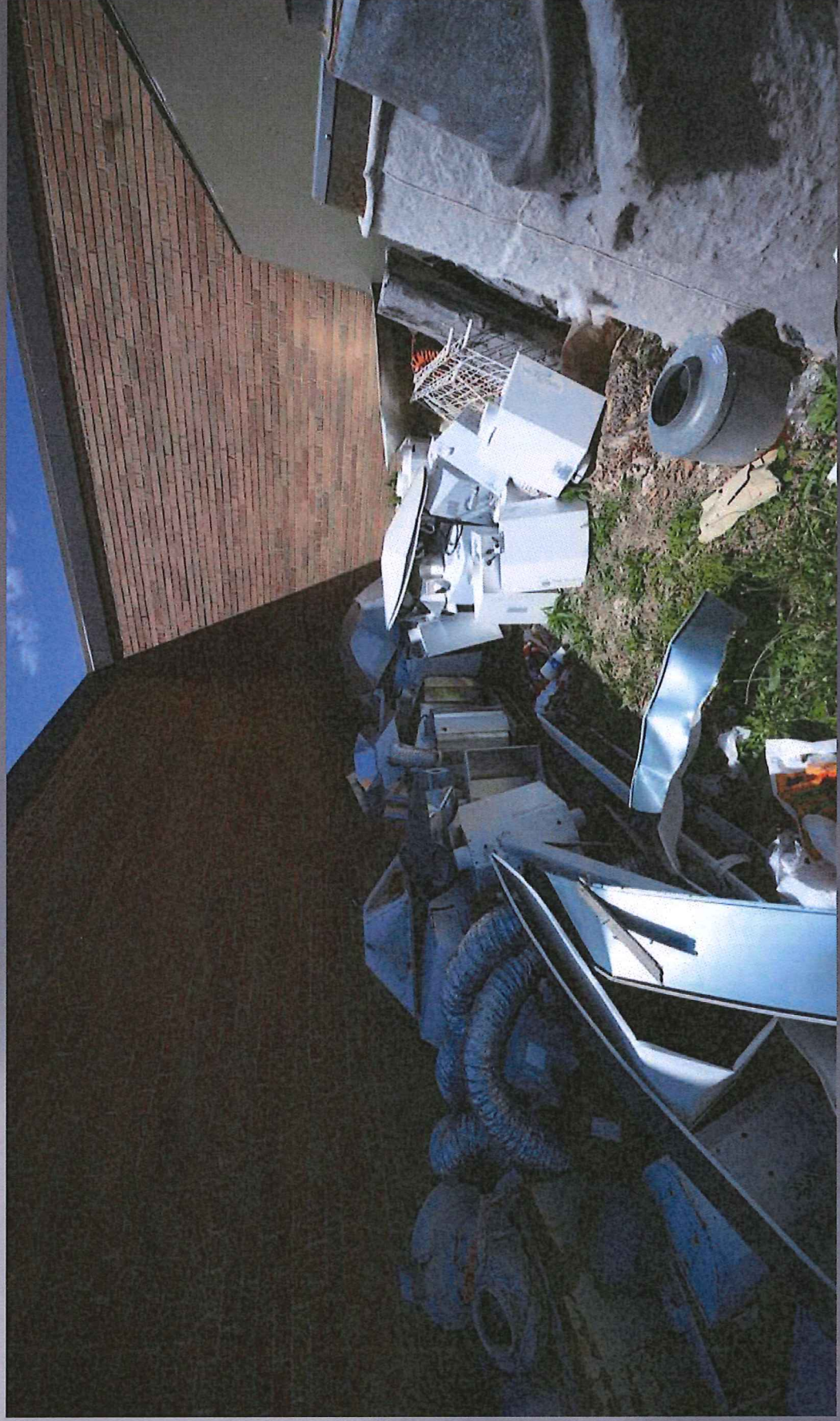
Lack of Storage cont.



Annex Property Room Issues



Annex continues



Annex continued



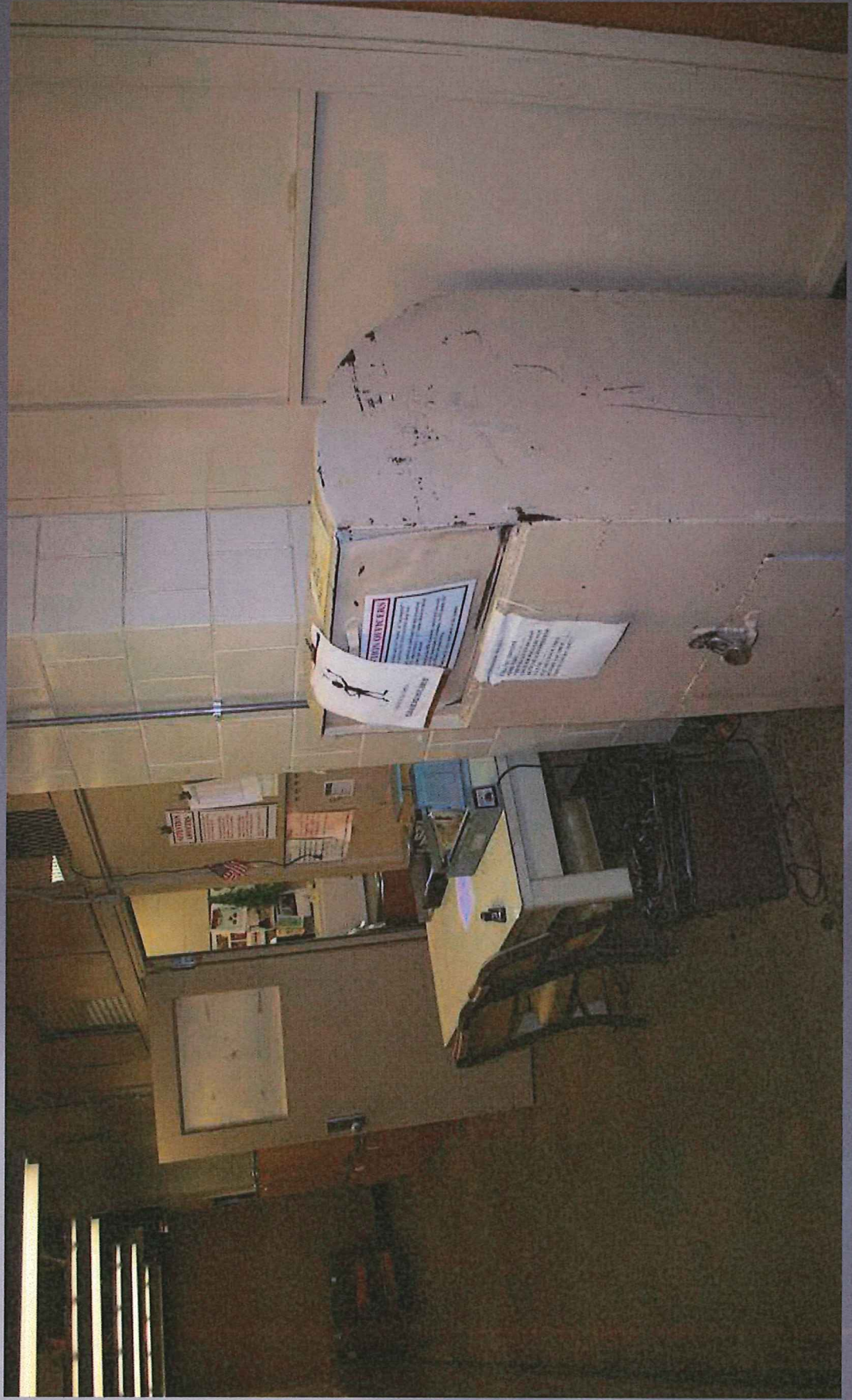
Annex continued



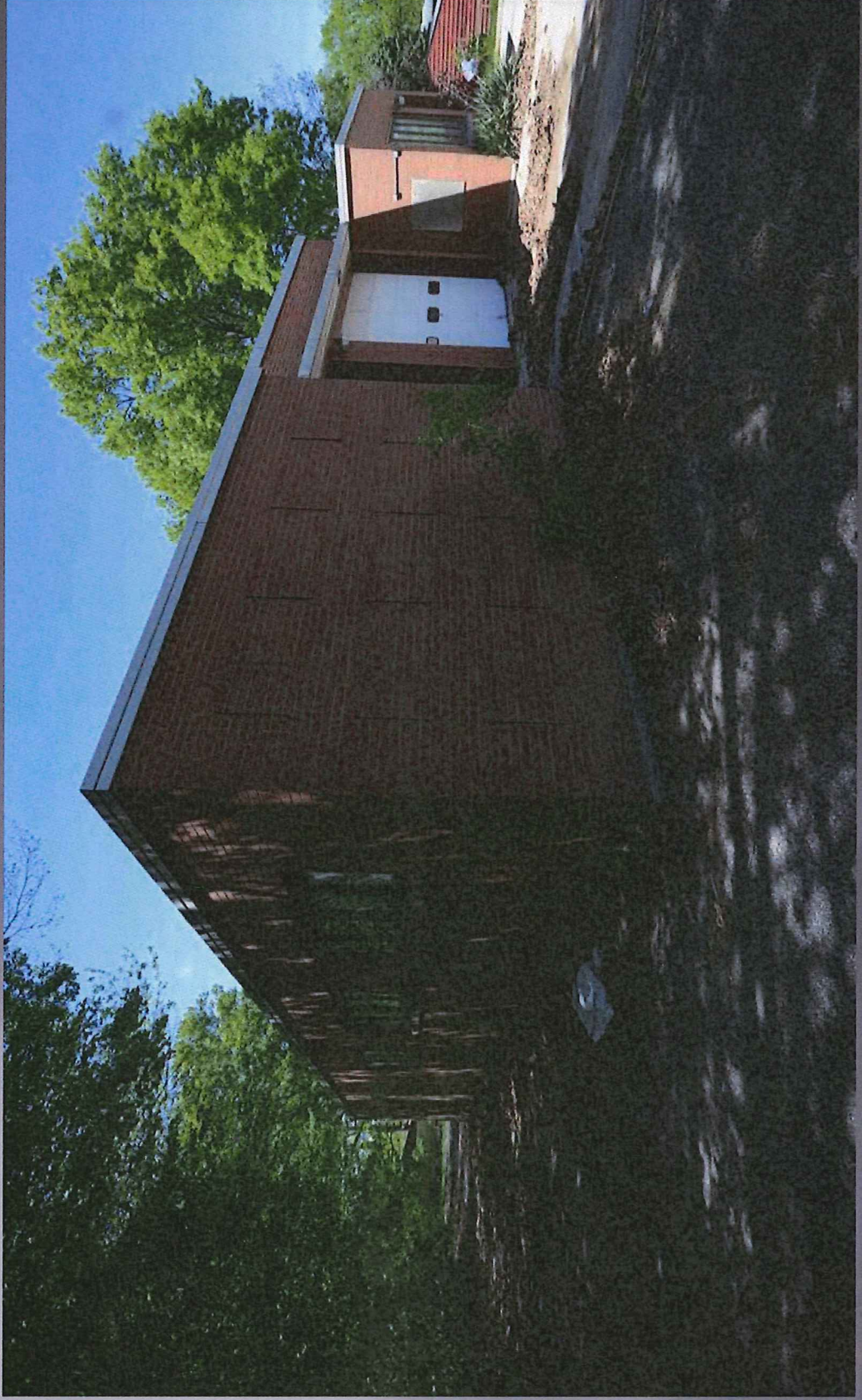
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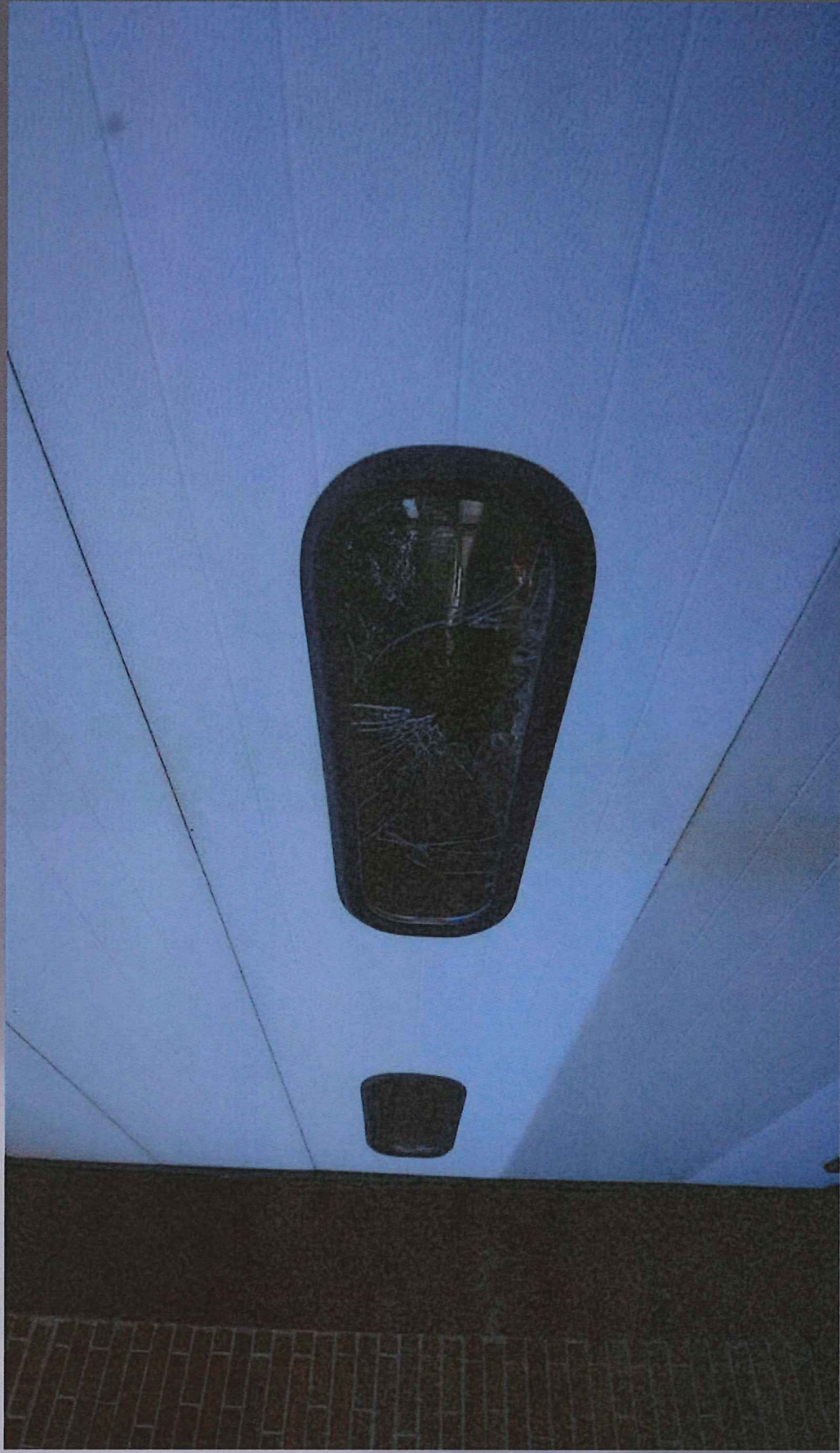
Narcotics Drop Box



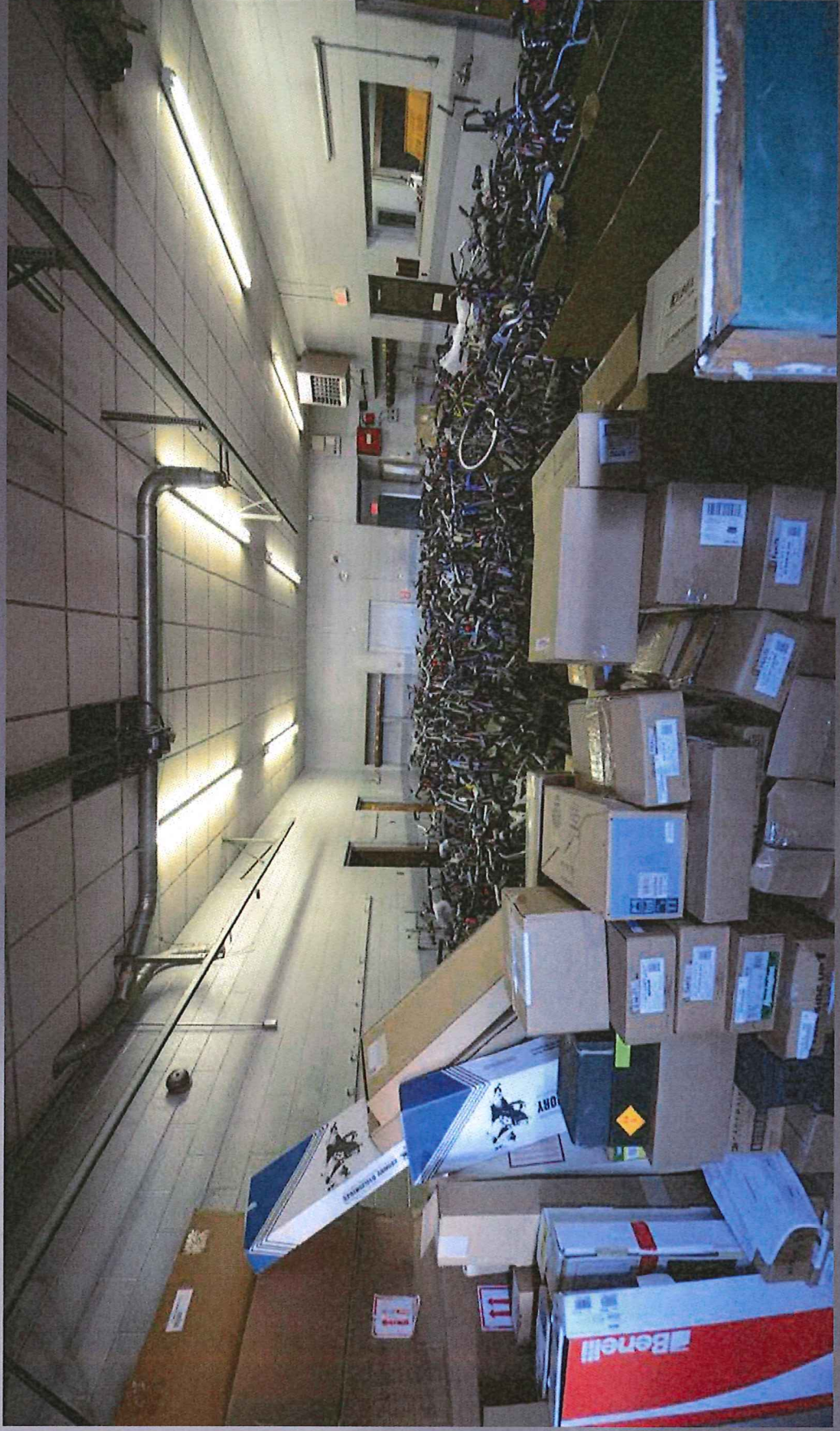
Firehouse storage Franklin Rd.



Firehouse continued



Firehouse continued



Museum Storage



Bomb Evidence Storage



Manpower Shortage

- Fully Staffed Property = 17
- Current staff = 12
- Overtime would be mitigated significantly
- Combining all 5 property room storage areas would increase amount of time spent at the facility.
- Effective supervision would occur

Evidence Handling

- “I just know it” , answer to my question of how proper procedures are followed.
- No training manual for new employee
- No formal training of the rules of evidence handling and storage.
- The rules are unwritten and have been passed down from employee to employee

Evidence handling cont.

- IMPD has a SOP titled property section which is fairly complete.
- However needs to be reviewed by a professional in evidence handling (Mike Medler)
- IMPD has a SOP for the Narcotics Vault
- However(same as above)

Evidence Handling cont.

- IMPD has General Order 9.4 titled Property and Evidence Control
- This General Order has been meets CALEA standards
- According to the Director Mike Medler, standard needs to be higher.
- Should meet ASCLD standard.

Evidence Handling cont.

- The property room personnel put in writing all the step by step procedures they currently use.
- This provides a baseline for review and sets the groundwork
- Obviously inadequate, but can be brought up to speed.

Storage Facilities

- 50 N. Alabama
- 901 N. Post Rd (Annex)
- 3262 N. Franklin Rd (old firehouse)
- 202 N. Alabama (old state museum)
- 3821 Industrial Blvd. (Northwest District)

Storage Facilities cont.

- Annex staffed by two employees
- Remaining facilities unstaffed
- Evidence requests requires employees every morning to travel between facilities, retrieve and drop it downtown to be held for the requesting officer, prosecutor etc....
- Unnecessary time spent away from evidence room.
- These two employees could be more effective remaining at the main facility.

Evidence Issues

- Evidence refrigerated units not alarmed
- Evidence rooms at the Annex are not alarmed
- Refrigerator units too small and storage issue
- After twelve months evidence removed from refrigeration to ambient storage at Annex
- No special requests for any evidence
- No temperature gauge on one of the refrigerators (What temperature is required?)

Recommendations

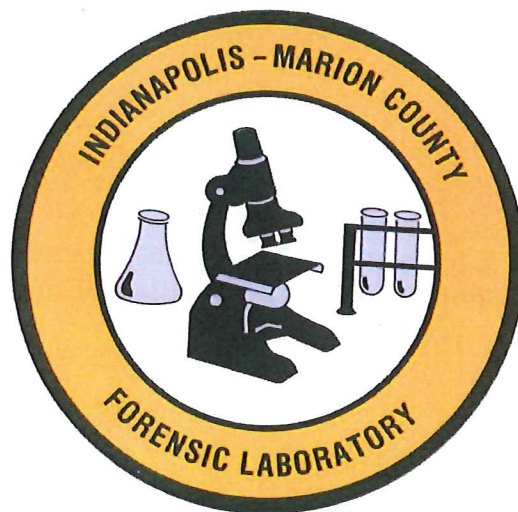
- Evidence and Property room needs Director
- Staff needs to be trained! (Currently non-existent)
- New property room (Current areas are grossly insufficient)
- Staff augmentation of 4 employees totaling 17
- New electronic procedure for processing evidence, current handwritten forms inefficient and very fallible
- Officers need to immediately clear their disposition orders. This would free up large amounts of space.

Recommendations cont.

- Bulletin ready to be sent out regarding EDO(Electronic Disposition Order)
- This will temporarily relieve storage restrictions but only for a short time
- Alarms need to be installed immediately on all storage facilities

**INDIANAPOLIS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROPERTY SECTION:**

**ASSESSMENT
AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**



MICHAEL M. MEDLER, Laboratory Director
DAVID R. ZAUNER, Assessor

INDIANAPOLIS-MARION COUNTY FORENSIC SERVICES AGENCY

Submitted January 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

Evidence and property control is a critical function of a law enforcement agency. Criminal investigations and prosecutions depend on the recognition, collection, and preservation of physical evidence. Recovered stolen property must be traced back to its rightful owner and returned as expeditiously as possible. Property taken for safekeeping must be held securely until it is released to the proper claimant. As a support function, it generally has a lower public profile and attracts less attention from public safety executives and fewer resources from the law enforcement agency's budget than more visible services such as police patrol and emergency response. However, problems in the evidence and property control system can have tremendous effects: cases may be dismissed or defendants acquitted when critical evidence is lost or mishandled, public confidence is shaken when money or property comes up missing or is released to the wrong person, and the attention of police commanders and other staff may be diverted from equally pressing needs to remedy the deficiencies.

Proper control of evidence and property begins with initial recovery or seizure. Patrol officers, detectives, and other employees must be cognizant of proper procedures for taking articles into police custody and the legal requirements that must be met. They must then transport these items safely, taking all necessary precautions against damage and contamination, to a storage center. Detailed inventories of evidence and property have to be prepared, and evidence to be subjected to forensic examination must be packaged and sealed to protect the integrity and forensic value of the items, before they are accepted for storage. Once accepted by the evidence and property storage center, every item must be assigned a storage location and every move tracked to assure an unbroken chain of custody. Material released temporarily for laboratory examination, investigative purposes, or court must be properly accounted for and measures taken to ensure timely return. Finally, officers or other staff members responsible for cases must properly authorize final release or other disposition of all articles associated with the case, in accordance with agency policy and applicable legal requirements.

A successful system for evidence and property control requires several elements: adequate facilities and space to receive, process, store, and prepare evidence and property for disposition; sufficient quality personnel to perform all of the functions required for proper control; comprehensive, standardized policies and procedures that govern all aspects of evidence and property control from initial acquisition to final disposition; and, perhaps most importantly, an adequate training program for everyone involved with any aspect of evidence and property to give them the knowledge needed to perform their parts of the process properly. Deficiencies in any of these elements will reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of the system and can result in major long-term problems.

2. PROJECT HISTORY AND SCOPE

Early in 2012, the Director of the Indianapolis-Marion County Forensic Services Agency (IMCFSA) offered assistance to the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) in studying the current situation and future needs of the IMPD Property Section.

This offer was prompted in part by continuing problems noted by IMCFSA personnel with evidence received from the Property Section, as well as publicity generated by reports of possible evidence mishandling in connection with high profile cases. The interim Chief of Police accepted the offer, inviting IMCFSA to participate in an assessment of the Property Section and make recommendations for improvement. In mid-2012, the IMCFSA Director assigned a staff member with both forensic science and evidence control experience to the project, with instructions to conduct an assessment and formulate recommendations. This project is *not* an investigation of a specific incident for the purpose of establishing responsibility, but rather an overall examination of facilities and functions.

On-site observations of the main property room in the City-County Building and the annex located at the Public Safety Training Academy on Post Road were made during July and early August. The main property room was visited on both day and middle shifts, and employees on both shifts and at the annex were interviewed informally. In addition to the site visits, IMPD General Orders and Standard Operating Procedures were reviewed, along with written documentation and photographs furnished by Property Section employees and audit reports prepared by the City of Indianapolis Office of Audit and Performance. The IMCFSA Director and assigned staff member met with members of the IMPD executive staff on several occasions in July and August to report progress and provide preliminary observations.

3. OBSERVATIONS

3.1. Facilities

The Property Section operates three separate locations: the main property room in the City-County Building, the property room annex at the Public Safety Training Academy, and an unused firehouse on Franklin Road. The main property room and annex are staffed, while the firehouse is used for bulk storage and has no assigned personnel. Two other locations house items that are in Property Section records but not under the authority of Section personnel: the old state museum on Alabama Street stores property seized and held by the Forfeiture Unit, and the Bomb Squad office at Northwest District Headquarters stores potentially explosive materials under control of Squad personnel. The storage facility for a particular item is determined by the type of article and how long it will be stored.

The main property room originally held most of the evidence and property in the custody of the Indianapolis Police Department, with some long-term storage at the annex. The Marion County Sheriff's Department stored its evidence and property in space at the Marion County Jail. As a result of space and personnel limitations at the Jail, in 1995 the IPD Property Section took control over all evidence and property previously housed by both agencies, except for most jail inmate property, greatly increasing the volume of material stored. Since the merger, the amount of material submitted has continued to rise, and legal requirements to retain and preserve evidence for long periods have resulted in more evidence and property being held for longer periods of time.

Now, only firearms, controlled substances, money and small valuables, and refrigerated articles are stored permanently until disposition at the main property room. All other evidence and property, excepting only some articles held for forfeiture, explosives, and flammables as mentioned above, are stored at the annex, with overflow storage for bulky items at the firehouse.

3.1.1. Main property room

Most evidence and property transactions take place at the main property room, in the basement of the City-County Building. There is a single window for both police and members of the public to transact business, which opens into a large room. A door is immediately adjacent to the window and allows access to the room from the outside hallway. A work area with desks for employees, some shelves, and other office equipment is directly in front of the window; the rest of the large room has rows of shelves for gun storage. Other separate rooms are used for drug evidence and small valuables storage, offices, latent print and media card submission, and evidence review. A loading dock and additional storage area are at the back of the complex.

Space is a significant concern. Shelves are full, with boxes sometimes placed several deep, making it difficult to find items if they are behind others. Large boxes are stacked in aisles in some areas. Barrels of drugs ready for disposal and boxes of guns occupy open floor space. There is no place away from the public, but outside the secure property room, for officers to fill out vouchers, package articles, and otherwise prepare evidence or property for submission, or to do drug field testing. Only limited space is available for officials to review evidence privately. Due to the lack of room, evidence is often stored, at least temporarily, in office space, and there is no physical separation between storage, work, and office areas.

Despite the crowded conditions, evidence and property storage is remarkably well organized, with all storage locations, even spaces on the floor, assigned locator codes for ease in finding items. Boxes are maintained in a logical order as much as possible, again to aid in finding things. There were a few instances during the observation period during which an article could not be immediately found, but Property Section employees indicated that, in almost all instances, these situations involve misplacement of articles or data-entry errors rather than outright loss.

3.1.2. Annex

The property room annex is co-located with the IMPD and Marion County Sheriff's Department training academies in an old school building. The facility was not designed for evidence and property storage, but is re-purposed space. Articles are stored in multiple interconnected rooms in the annex wing, with overflow storage in several unused academy classrooms that could be reclaimed at any time. The permanent rooms are mostly well arranged with labeled shelving units, but some have boxes stacked on pallets on the floors in between the shelving units. Articles in the classrooms are mostly stacked in boxes along the walls with some large or bulky articles sitting out on the floors.

There is an outside storage area for large, heavy items that will not fit inside; this area is fenced but not truly secure. Some items that would fit indoors, such as automated teller machines and vending machines, are left outside because the Property Section has no equipment capable of lifting and transporting them. Many heavy items are delivered by tow trucks. There is no loading dock to allow direct loading or unloading of transport trucks.

When possible, similar articles are grouped together for storage: computers, large flat-screen televisions, doors and windows, air rifles and BB guns, and bicycles have their own storage areas within the annex. Lawn and garden equipment is stored in a separate room with outside access for fire safety, since some of the equipment may have small amounts of gasoline remaining in tanks. Evidence from old homicides and other major crimes that will need to be retained permanently is boxed and has its own storage area.

Most articles are placed in boxes for storage to make it easier to shelve them and find them later; several different standard sizes are used depending on the size and quantity of articles, and each box is labeled with all its contents. Cardboard sheets or flattened boxes are secured over the screens of the large televisions to protect them from damage and allow them to be stored closer together. Property awaiting auction is held in bins or on pallets in the back area of the annex.

There is a critical shortage of space at the annex. Shelves are filled almost to overflowing, boxes are stacked on pallets in aisles, and two classrooms have been borrowed for overflow storage. Boxes of paper records, including original property vouchers, withdrawal receipts, and final disposition records are stored at the annex as there is no room at the main property room for them; these records must be maintained for years to document all material that has been in police custody and its final disposition. There is only limited office and working space; evidence and property fills almost every available spot.

As is the case at the main property room, the annex, although crowded, is well organized. Each room is assigned a locator code, with individual shelves, pallets, and floor locations within rooms coded also. Section employees can usually retrieve items quickly, although sometimes boxes arranged several deep on shelves present difficulties. During observation a few items could not be readily located; a Section employee said that this does happen from time to time but almost always items are eventually found.

3.1.3. Other locations

These three facilities were not visited during the assessment as they do not play a large role in the daily operations of the Property Section. Information about these locations was gathered during interviews of Section employees and reviews of documents prepared previously by several of those employees.

Firehouse: Used mainly as overflow storage for large, bulky items, this building is not staffed and only visited as needed to add or remove property or for maintenance. The building is supposedly alarmed but there has been an incident in which a Section employee arrived at the firehouse to find one of the doors open but the alarm was not activated.

Old State Museum: This building houses property seized by the IMPD Forfeiture Unit. Although the property is inventoried and entered in Property Section records, Section employees do not have access to the building nor control over its contents.

IMPD Bomb Squad office: Explosives and other dangerous items are stored at this location, which is at the Northwest District headquarters. Again, although the Property Section maintains the records, the items are in the physical custody of the Bomb Squad with no direct access by Property Section employees.

3.1.4. Security and Workplace Safety

Security is an issue at all facilities. Few safeguards exist to protect the evidence and property stored in these facilities or the employees working there. Property Section staff do not have direct access to some facilities at which articles are stored, even though records of those articles are maintained by the Section and Section employees are responsible for tracking the movements of the items. In addition to security risks, other hazards to employees are presented by the nature of items in police custody: firearms, sharp weapons, biological and chemical hazards from drugs and other contraband, fire hazards from flammable materials, and risks associated with moving heavy or bulky items. Overcrowding adds to these hazards, with overloaded shelves, stacked cartons, and obstructed aisles and access routes noted at both facilities visited.

At the main property room, there is no separation between police and public access areas outside the property room. Officers or laboratory personnel turning in or receiving guns, drugs, and other evidence mingle with members of the public, sometimes agitated, who are there to retrieve personal property; there may be lines of people waiting outside the window at times. Although there are electric locks on doors between the property room and the public hallway, the window has only a wire cage that can be raised or lowered. There is no security camera coverage of the hallway or window.

Inside the property room, it is difficult to limit access to specific areas once someone has been allowed past the outer door. Officers submitting drug evidence must walk through the work area to get to the space set aside for preliminary testing, then walk back to the drop box after testing is completed. Although those who are not Section employees should be escorted whenever inside the Section, this is often difficult if the property room is busy. This area also is not under video surveillance. A handwritten log has been started to track any outside personnel given access to the secured area of the property room but sometimes visitors forget to sign in or out or are not always required to.

The crowded space and inadequate security give rise to concerns about employee safety as well. Sometimes members of the public become irate when told that property cannot be released or is not immediately available; and physical barriers between Property Section employees and the public are limited. Inside the property room, boxes stacked on top of shelves may fall over if moved and containers in aisles may obstruct access or exit in an emergency. Heavy or bulky items are difficult to deal with in the absence of proper handling equipment. Air quality is not good due to poor ventilation; the odor of marijuana is evident in the drug vault even though air filtration units have been installed, and moldy marijuana can be a significant hazard especially to those with mold allergies.

Security is a concern at the annex since there is not a police presence 24 hours a day. The wing occupied by the annex is alarmed, but the classrooms used for overflow storage are not, and there are no cameras for continuous surveillance. Doors, windows, and locks are not suited for high security applications. Since the public is allowed access to the annex during business hours, there are potential problems if someone becomes agitated as police officers may not be immediately available to assist the Section employees. Members of the public appear at the annex to surrender guns pursuant to court order, and each time an officer must be summoned to take custody of the gun. Wire mesh is the only barrier separating the public access area from the secured intake and release area of the annex. Annex personnel use an on-line spreadsheet as an access control log.

Because of the environment at the annex, with sometimes heavy and bulky items stored in crowded conditions, employee safety is an issue. Boxes stacked on pallets present a safety hazard: During the observation period, boxes were being moved to search for an item and several that were precariously balanced toppled over on an employee; fortunately they were light and no damage or injury occurred, but the consequences could have been serious. Other than carts and ladders, there is no equipment to assist with retrieving or moving items, especially heavy ones.

3.2. Personnel

There are 12 permanent civilian employees currently assigned to the Property Section: the Section Manager, one person in the drug vault, four people on day shift, two on middle shift, two on late shift, and two at the annex. A recruit injured at the academy is temporarily assigned to middle shift to supplement the civilian staff. This is a reduction from the full complement of 17 employees, including the manager, two employees in the drug vault, four day shift employees, four middle shift employees, three on night shift, and three at the annex. Although many employees have been there for years, there are several with only a few months' experience.

As a result of rotating days off due to the seven-day schedule at the main property room, there is usually only one person working night shift and sometimes only one on middle shift. When employees are ill or on vacation, staffing becomes even more problematic and sometimes those on one shift must work overtime to cover another shift. It is difficult to schedule days off and ensure that there is someone working on every shift. If the single person assigned to the drug vault is off, another day shift employee must take over that person's work. One person working alone can be overwhelmed quickly by multiple submissions of evidence or property, especially if drug testing is required, money must be counted, or there are many items to check. If an employee working alone becomes incapacitated and unable to call for help due to illness or injury, aid may not arrive until hours later when someone from the next shift arrives.

With fewer people working, it becomes more difficult to find time to perform such necessary tasks as periodic inventory, pulling items on disposal status for sale or destruction, and reorganizing storage areas as needed. Employees are so busy with daily work that they are unable to integrate these other functions into the workday. This adds to the overall burden on the Property Section by increasing the amount of storage space needed.

Since the Property Section is one of the few sections of IMPD that is open around the clock, its staff is also tasked with providing certain supplies to officers when other offices are closed, including traffic tickets, media cards, and Taser cartridges. The responsibility for stocking, maintaining, and issuing these supplies takes additional employee time away from evidence and property management duties.

The civilian employees of the Property Section are classified along the lines of clerical or warehouse workers, which does not take into account the critical value of evidence and property to the criminal justice system; the knowledge required to perform the myriad functions of the job, including technical skills involved in preliminary drug testing; or the hazards inherent in working with some types of evidence and property. One Section employee mentioned meeting a person with similar responsibilities from a police department outside the state who made \$40,000 per year; while an internet search found that IMPD Property Section employees' salaries are among the lowest in the country.

Communication within the Section, between the Section and the rest of IMPD, and with other agencies in the criminal justice system is lacking. Most communication within the Section is by electronic mail, and there are no staff meetings between the Section Manager and other employees or supervisors. Some employees are frustrated by their lack of input into discussions of issues or the decision-making process. There seems to be a general lack of understanding of the important function of the Section and its employees within IMPD, and this may contribute to friction between police officers and civilian employees. Several employees mentioned that the Section becomes a clearing house for information related to evidence and property by default because of a lack of communication and fragmentation between different people and entities within the criminal justice system.

All employees interviewed during this assessment were interested in doing their jobs to the best of their abilities and welcomed the potential for improvements in the Section. Many expressed frustration with the lack of space, personnel, and other resources and said that these problems have been overlooked or neglected for years by the command staff; a few believed that conditions would never change during their careers. Employees stated that they have to make decisions without adequate guidance or support from management, and their lack of training hampers their ability to do their jobs and could compromise evidence. Property Section staff often do additional work to assist officers with property and evidence submission and research cases prior to disposition in an attempt to ensure that everything is handled properly.

3.3. Equipment and Technology

Aside from the WinACE system for tracking evidence and property and a computer for recording drug test results, there is no automation within the Section. Advanced security devices such as programmable electronic locks and recording security cameras are nonexistent. Standard material handling equipment found in warehouses is lacking. Even basic supplies are hard to obtain due to budget constraints.

3.3.1. WinACE

WinACE is a comprehensive system for tracking articles held by the Property Section (and by the Forfeiture Unit and Bomb Squad as noted above). Item descriptions are entered when the articles are first received, bar code labels are printed and affixed to articles or packages, and every move or change of possession is logged in the system from initial receipt to final disposition. Persons associated with the evidence or property, such as owners or arrestees, are also entered in the system. The database can be searched using multiple parameters, including item descriptors and person names, and a variety of management reports can be generated. Documents authorizing final disposition of evidence or property can be generated or officers can authorize disposition through remote electronic access. Property Section staff generally consider WinACE to be easy to use and essential to doing their work.

Despite the usefulness of WinACE, it has serious limitations. It is a stand-alone system and does not connect to any other information management systems within IMPD. Broken or non-functional components are sometimes not repaired or replaced due to a lack of funding; for example, one label printer is no longer working and there is a shortage of bar-code scanners that could be used for inventories. Paper documents are still used extensively, including property vouchers, transfer receipts, disposition orders, and release receipts; those documents must be maintained indefinitely, which requires additional storage space. Officers find the electronic process for authorizing disposition of property to be cumbersome and time-consuming and so are reluctant to use it. Sometimes the original "responsible officer" for evidence is not the officer assigned to the case, and if the Property Section is not notified this is not changed in WinACE and the original officer could erroneously order disposition of evidence in a case that is still active.

3.3.2. Preliminary Drug Screening

There is a computer for recording results of preliminary drug tests performed by Property Section personnel. The program was developed by IMPD and stores test results in a database as well as printing a report for the officer. As with WinACE, this system does not communicate with any other systems.

Test reagents and other supplies for preliminary drug screening tests are furnished by IMCFSA.

3.3.3. Other Equipment

The Property Section has basic shelving units, ladders, carts, dollies, and a hydraulic pallet jack at the annex. The Section also has a box truck for moving articles between facilities. There is no working forklift truck, powered lift, motorized cart, or specialized shelves or racks for specific types of articles.

Biological material submitted as evidence must often be refrigerated or frozen to preserve it for future laboratory examination. All articles requiring refrigeration are stored in the main property room, as none of the other locations have refrigerated storage. There are two refrigerators, one of which is old and has no temperature gauge or working interior

lights. Neither refrigerator has been calibrated, has any temperature-out-of-range alarm, or is on emergency power. There are no freezers in the main property room; any samples that must be kept frozen are retained at IMCFSA.

There are a limited number of ventilated drying cabinets at the main property room for hanging wet clothing and other articles. Security of the articles is uncertain as they are unpackaged and access is not restricted to the officer who submitted the articles. It is also uncertain how often the cabinets are cleaned, which is especially important when items wet with biological fluids are dried as there are employee safety and evidence contamination concerns. Sometimes officers are referred to IMCFSA for drying large articles or large quantities, especially blood-soaked items.

Air filters and electronic insect killers have been installed in the main property room to help reduce odors from stored drugs, especially marijuana, and the proliferation of flies; the effectiveness of these devices has been variable at best.

3.3.4. Supplies

Evidence envelopes, paper bags, and cardboard boxes are often in short supply; there have been occasions when the Property Section has run out of some of these completely. Latex or nitrile gloves are essential to protect evidence from contamination, and protect employees from hazardous evidence, but they are so scarce that sometimes employees and officers are reluctant to use them as often as might be prudent as they are afraid of running out.

The budget is insufficient to keep office supplies in stock, and employees mentioned sometimes having to buy such items as pens and staplers themselves.

3.4. Training

There is no formal training program for new Property Section employees; instead, they depend on more experienced employees to show them how to perform the different functions of the job. The only formal training provided is for preliminary drug testing, and that is done by IMCFSA personnel. There is also no in-service training for current employees; even if such training could be offered, limited personnel would make it difficult or impossible to staff the Section while some employees were in training. All employees interviewed expressed a desire for training to give them additional knowledge to better perform their jobs.

Police officers receive little Academy training in evidence recognition, recovery, and preservation or in the legal aspects of property and evidence, although these topics may be addressed somewhat during the field training process. Property Section employees often must help officers through the submission process, especially those who seldom turn in items. Officers are unfamiliar with legal requirements for disposing of articles; some are reluctant to order disposition of anything, while others authorize disposition despite not knowing full case circumstances.

Safety training for Section employees in such areas as biological hazards, chemical exposure, and firearms handling is nonexistent. The City used to contract with a biohazard disposal company that offered occupational safety and health training with mock

inspections, but then changed to another company that submitted a lower bid but offers no such training.

3.5. Policies and Procedures

IMPD policies and procedures for evidence control and Property Section operations appear in several documents, including General Order 9.4, Property and Evidence Control; Property Section Standard Operating Procedure; and Property Section – Narcotics Vault Standard Operating Procedure. General Order 9.4 provides mostly general policy guidance, while the two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) focus on specific procedures. However, none of these documents provide detailed guidance on how to do the wide array of functions typically carried out by Section employees on a daily basis. Section VI of the Property Section Standard Operating Procedure, "Performance of Spot Tests," is the only part that explains in depth exactly how a process is performed, and this section was written by IMCFSA chemists. Lacking detailed procedural references, employees develop their own individual methods for doing things, leading to the same operations being done differently on different shifts, or even by different people on the same shift.

The Section has no training manual for new employees to help them learn how to perform all the different functions of their jobs. Although instruction by experienced employees is an important part of any job training process, when those experienced employees are not guided by a detailed procedures manual, individual variations get passed on to new employees, who may be confused when other experienced employees tell them to perform the same functions in different ways.

It should be noted that the documents made available for review were undated drafts which may differ from the versions actually in effect at the time of this assessment.

3.6. Evidence Concerns Noted by IMCFSA

On a number of occasions, evidence has been received by IMCFSA personnel for laboratory examination that has been improperly packaged or protected or incorrectly described. In addition, there were several instances observed at the property room in which items that could potentially be subjected to laboratory examination were handled without gloves by an officer, or several separate items were packaged together by an officer or a Property Section employee. Improper preservation can interfere with forensic examinations, particularly latent print processing and DNA sampling; sometimes the evidence is compromised to such an extent that examination is impossible. Inaccurate evidence descriptions can make it difficult for IMCFSA examiners to determine which items should be examined, or give the appearance of discrepancies when none actually exist.

Evidence submitted to IMCFSA for examination has been poorly packaged, such as duct tape submitted for latent print processing in a paper bag that was crushed in storage, or improperly secured for safety, such as knives submitted for latent print processing and DNA recovery that were taped to boxes or had their blades taped over. On a few occasions, articles have been received from the Property Section for latent prints and DNA that were not packaged at all and had WinACE labels applied directly to the articles; due to unprotected handling and the likelihood of contamination, no examinations could be

performed. Firearms have been received that have had bleach applied to clean them or chalk used on serial numbers, again potentially compromising forensic evidence. Loose ammunition has been received in gun boxes with handguns, presenting not only the chance that cartridges may be lost but also safety concerns. IMCFSA has records of occurrences going back for several years.

Evidence descriptions are often minimal and sometimes inaccurate; article types, brand names, model designations, and serial numbers may be missing or incorrectly recorded. Sometimes IMCFSA personnel find it difficult to determine whether an article received from the Property Section is the same one referenced in the Request for Laboratory Examination and must contact the investigator to resolve the question. IMCFSA firearms examiners have found multiple instances in which firearms are not described accurately, often including incorrect serial numbers. This can lead to stolen firearms not being discovered, or legally possessed firearms wrongly identified as stolen, and could mean the difference between a firearm being returned to its owner or mistakenly destroyed. Even worse, someone might be wrongly charged with a crime.

These problems with evidence preservation and identification result from a lack of basic knowledge of evidence handling on the part of the officers who recover the evidence as well as Property Section employees. This knowledge deficit can be traced directly to training that is minimal or nonexistent, as well as the lack of comprehensive written procedures.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Any significant improvement in the operation of the Property Section will require additional resources for physical facilities, personnel, equipment, and training. Changes in policies and procedures, while important, are not sufficient to effect meaningful change by themselves. The recommendations presented below are somewhat general in nature, as it is beyond the scope of this project to design a building, develop a staffing table, or write a procedures manual. Rather, these recommendations highlight major areas that should be addressed when those detailed proposals are developed.

Two specific recommendation may be appropriate at this point: First, the Property Section should be renamed the Evidence and Property Control Section or Evidence and Property Management Section to more accurately reflect its function within IMPD and its importance to the criminal justice system. Second, the Section should no longer be responsible for issuing non-evidence-related supplies to officers; this task should be assigned to a separate quartermaster or supply section, allowing the Evidence and Property Section staff to devote their full attention to evidence and property management.

4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. Single Location

If possible, all evidence and property should be consolidated at a single location to avoid the time and expense of transporting items between different facilities. If this is not

feasible, articles that must be stored long-term but are seldom needed, such as major case evidence being held after conviction pending appeal, might be stored at a second site that is not routinely staffed. Storage facilities, whether new or retrofitted, should be well-built and designed to be secure against fire, intrusion, flooding, and severe weather. All areas should be well lit, and proper ventilation is imperative. A firm or organization experienced in modifying existing structures or building new facilities for secure storage of large quantities of material for law enforcement agencies should be engaged to assist in planning the Property Section facility.

Separate access points should be provided for the general public and for police and other criminal justice agency personnel. The public access area should have sufficient space for waiting without overcrowding. The police and criminal justice access area should be away from the public access, and have a place for officers to complete paperwork and package evidence as needed. A small room for preliminary drug testing should be placed adjacent to the police access area so that officers could observe the tests without entering the secured area of the Property Section. The facility should be designed so that the need for those who are not Section employees to routinely enter secured areas is eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum.

Storage areas should be configured so that maximum use can be made of the space available, with similar articles stored together. Separate rooms or areas should be provided for drugs, firearms, and money and small valuables; if flammables and/or explosives are stored in the main facility they should be in reinforced rooms or separate structures for maximum safety.

Offices should be available for the Section manager and supervisors, and the general work area should be separated from evidence and property storage areas. One or more separate rooms, accessible from both the police access area and the secured area of the Section, should be available so that criminal justice personnel can review evidence in a case without the necessity of taking it outside the Section.

There should be a loading dock available for receiving or releasing large or bulky items, or large quantities, or for unloading Section supplies. Ideally, it should be possible for a truck to be driven inside and loaded or unloaded. Access between the dock and the rest of the Section should be controlled.

4.1.2. Security and Workplace Safety

High security is essential to protect the evidence and property stored in the facility and the employees who work there. The building should be of solid masonry construction with reinforced steel doors on the exterior and between secure and non-secure areas. Although natural light is desirable, windows should be limited and made from reinforced material, perhaps bullet-resistant glass. Adequate physical barriers should separate interior non-secure areas, especially the public access area, from secure areas; these barriers might include reinforced glass windows rather than the wire mesh barriers currently in place.

Fire and intrusion alarms and constant video surveillance should protect the main facility and any other locations at which evidence and property are stored. Access control

systems should prevent all persons except Section employees and others with specific authority from entering secure areas of any facility.

The facility must have enough floor space and shelving to allow all articles to be stored properly without obstructing aisles or overloading shelves. Safe and functional ladders, lifts, and other equipment must be available to move and access articles. Precautions must be taken to minimize exposure to biological and chemical hazards, and sufficient ventilation must be provided to maintain good air quality, especially in the drug storage and flammable storage areas.

4.2. Personnel

Sufficient staff must be provided to carry out all the functions of the Section, and those employees must be dedicated and dependable with unquestioned integrity. The manager should be knowledgeable about evidence and property control in addition to personnel management matters. Although the manager may be either a civilian or a sworn officer, a civilian manager may provide more continuity if he or she views the position as a career rather than a temporary assignment. In addition, assigning a sworn officer to the position would not make effective use of the officer's law enforcement training. Regardless of whether the manager is an officer or civilian, that person and all Section employees should have the authority to require that *all* IMPD personnel, whether sworn or civilian, follow IMPD regulations and procedures to ensure the proper handling and control of evidence and property.

Consolidating all or most storage and activity at a single location will decrease the number of people needed, but there will still be a need to staff three shifts. There should be enough people on each shift to do not only the normal daily work, but also ongoing tasks such as periodic inventories and preparing articles for disposal which are deferred when there are not enough people to do everything. The number of people needed per shift will vary, with more needed on day and middle shifts during the week and fewer on weekends and on night shift. However, there should be enough people on a shift so that it is rare for a single employee to work alone, even at night or on a weekend, not only because the workload can be unpredictable but also for safety. In addition, more people per shift would create better working conditions in that weekends could be rotated and it would be easier for employees to take time off when needed.

Alternatives to adding staff include adjusting or staggering shifts, limiting public access hours, or discontinuing 24 hour operation and redistributing existing personnel. However, the last option would be a major change in operating policy that could cause serious difficulties, at least temporarily, and is mentioned only as a last resort.

Job descriptions for Section employees, including the manager, should be modified to include the full range of responsibilities and knowledge, including technical requirements, that go far beyond what is expected of a clerk or warehouse worker, and reflect the critical importance of the positions to the criminal justice system; and the positions should be re-titled as Evidence and Property Control Specialists. A proposed job description is attached to this document as Appendix A. Salary adjustments should then be made based on the modified job descriptions. Competitive salaries are important for

retaining good, experienced employees and attracting qualified candidates when positions open.

Every effort should be made to keep lines of communication open between managers, supervisors, and employees. Shift and Section meetings should be held on a regular basis, and the Section manager should spend time at the Section on all shifts and all days to monitor operations and provide opportunities for discussions with employees. People will do their best work when they are involved in the entire process and have a say in how things are done, and respected for their knowledge and abilities.

4.3. Equipment and Technology

Better use of information technology, improved storage equipment, and working material handling equipment will aid in effective and efficient operation of the evidence and property center, and additional security systems will help protect the facility, its contents, and the people who work there.

4.3.1. Evidence and property tracking system

Although the WinACE system has proven very useful and effective in keeping track of articles in IMPD custody, it does have some drawbacks as mentioned previously, chief among them being its isolation from other IMPD information management systems. Acquisition of a system that retains or improves upon the features of WinACE while also integrating with case reporting and management systems should be strongly considered. Some additional capabilities would be useful in making evidence and property management more efficient and reducing the possibility of losing or mishandling articles, including:

- One-time entry of property descriptions and person information for both case reporting and property tracking
- Creation of an electronic property voucher from an officer's in-car computer at the time items are recovered, eliminating the need for a paper record and starting the chain of custody when the items first come into IMPD possession
- Ability to support radio frequency identification (RFID) tagging of articles to allow automatic tracking of movements within the storage facility without the need to scan barcodes every time locations are changed, if the cost becomes reasonable in the future
- Automatic update of the officer responsible for authorizing evidence and property disposition whenever a case is reassigned
- Electronic communication with courts and prosecutors to allow remote inquiries about evidence and property status and direct transmission of court orders and other disposition instructions, so there is time to research cases before persons appear to claim their property
- Electronic capture of signatures, scans of identification documents, and possibly photographs and/or fingerprints, of claimants when articles are released, eliminating the need for storing paper receipts

- Automatic update of case record when evidence or property is released, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of

Assuming that Property Section employees continue to perform preliminary drug testing, the stand-alone system for reporting those results should either be integrated with other systems or a different system should be adopted so that the results become part of the case record.

4.3.2. Storage and material handling equipment

Specialized shelving units and racks designed to accommodate objects of different sizes and shapes and store a maximum quantity of material in a minimum space should be evaluated for installation in the storage facility. Modular systems could be assembled and reconfigured as storage needs change. Motorized, moving shelves would greatly increase the amount of material stored in a given area, since the shelving units could be moved to create aisles as needed and no permanent aisles would be required. In a facility with high ceilings, extended height shelving units would hold more material on the same floor area. Storage racks designed to accommodate large or bulky items such as doors, artwork, or flat-screen televisions could permit more efficient use of available space while protecting these items from accidental damage. Reinforced shelves might allow for stacking large, heavy items such as appliances or gambling machines for storage, but a good deal of open floor space will still be needed for articles that are too large for shelves.

Manual and powered equipment for moving articles easily and safely around the facility should be provided. Carts, dollies, and hand trucks will suffice for smaller, lighter items, but forklift trucks and pallet jacks will be needed to move large, heavy items. Sturdy ladders are needed for placing and removing articles on shelves; if extended height shelving is used, motorized lifts may be advisable for safety. If evidence and property are stored at more than one location, a truck will be needed to transport articles between locations; depending on how often this is required, the truck could perhaps be shared with other IMPD sections or City agencies.

The facility should be equipped with several drying cabinets for wet materials such as blood-soaked clothing. The cabinets should be made from material resistant to staining and easy to clean, with a window and interior lighting so that contents can be observed. Each unit should have a separate ventilation system with filters capable of trapping bacteria and other pathogens so they are not released outside the unit; the units should either be equipped with devices that indicate when filters should be changed or a change schedule must be strictly adhered to and documented. Each unit should have a separately keyed lock so that access to items can be controlled and chain of custody preserved.

Refrigerators, and possibly freezers, with sufficient space to meet anticipated needs for cold storage should be provided. These units should include precise temperature controls and recorders, with alarms to indicate any malfunction. They should have locks to prevent inadvertent opening. As an alternative to individual units, building a cold room into the facility may be worth consideration; this room should include the same types of controls, recorders, and alarms. Refrigerated storage, whether individual units or a cold room, should be connected to an emergency power source in case the commercial power supply is interrupted.

4.3.3. Security devices

A fire alarm and suppression system is a basic requirement for any structure; it should be connected directly to the emergency communications center. The method used for fire suppression should be chosen to minimize damage to stored evidence and property, while still protecting the people in the building.

Intrusion alarm sensors should be placed at all exterior doors and windows, and all doors between secure and non-secure areas of the building; this system should also be connected to the communications center. If a secondary facility is used for long-term storage and is not constantly staffed, motion detectors may provide additional protection.

The main facility and any secondary storage building should be equipped with video surveillance cameras which provide complete coverage of the exterior, all interior storage areas, and the preliminary drug testing room; these should be connected to recording devices and to monitors at the communications center. Panic alarms to summon police or medical assistance should be strategically placed throughout the facility, especially if there is no 24 hour police presence on site.

Access to secured areas of the facility should be controlled by electronic key card readers, fingerprint scanners, or similar devices that record all persons as they enter and leave the area. This would eliminate the need for manual access control logs, as well as providing a way to instantly deny access to individuals on termination of employment or when required for other reasons. Access to specific rooms inside the secured area could be monitored with these devices as well, if that is desired.

4.3.4. Supplies

Preserving the evidential value of articles, protecting them from damage, identifying and tracking them, and making them easier to store and locate require basic supplies such as cardboard boxes, paper and plastic bags, envelopes, evidence tape, and labels. Latex and nitrile gloves in a variety of sizes are essential protection, both to preserve evidence and to protect officers and Section employees from hazardous evidence and property. Sufficient funding should be available to provide all supplies needed including basic office supplies.

4.4. Training

4.4.1. Police Officers

The IMPD Academy should incorporate training in evidence recognition, recovery, and preservation into the basic recruit classes. Instruction should include the definition of evidence, preservation of articles for later laboratory examination, inventory procedures, and packaging methods. Legal issues related to seizure of evidence or property, holding it in police custody, and final release or other disposition should also be addressed. Academy training should be reinforced during field training. In-service training in all of these areas for experienced officers should be considered as well. Adding this training should help officers improve evidence recovery techniques and understand the importance of proper

management of evidence and property. IMCFSA should see improvements in packaging and preservation of evidence submitted for examination.

4.4.2. Section Employees

An initial training program for new Section employees should be developed which includes legal and public policy aspects of evidence and property management as well as detailed instructions for performing the various tasks involved in Section operations. A training manual should be written and provided to new employees for use while they are in training, and for later reference as needed; this manual could perhaps be combined with the procedures manual discussed in the following section. Ongoing training should be provided to all employees to keep everyone apprised of changes in policies, procedures, and best practices.

Most instruction will be given by experienced Section employees or supervisors; if there are sufficient personnel assigned to the Section designating a specific individual as a trainer may be advisable. Outside instructors, such as IMPD officers, detectives, and evidence technicians; Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys; and IMCFSA personnel can be utilized for specific training modules. A visit to the IMCFSA laboratory would give Section employees a better understanding of what happens to evidence during examination and the need for proper preservation of evidence items.

Safety is an essential part of the initial training program. Employees must receive training in biological and chemical hazards, firearms safety, fire prevention, and proper operation of all equipment used in the storage facility. If a transport truck is used, employees using that truck may need specialized training to obtain a commercial driver's license for legal operation.

4.5. Policies and Procedures

A comprehensive guide to evidence and property management should be developed which includes not only general policy directives but also detailed operating procedures for both police officers and Section staff. Although many of the procedures will need to be written by those who are most familiar with current practices, useful material that will assist in the process may be available from other law enforcement agencies that have such procedures manuals, and from professional organizations in the field of evidence and property management. While it is not possible to prescribe in exact detail every action involved in managing evidence and property, and unusual situations cannot always be anticipated, procedures for basic functions carried out routinely should be detailed enough so that employees can understand how to perform those functions and do them the same way every time.

For police officers, legal requirements for seizing and evidence and property should be addressed, instructions for inventorying and describing articles should be provided, and guidelines for deciding how long to hold articles and when and how to order final disposition should be included. The differences between evidence and property should be discussed, and detailed instructions for handling, preserving, and packaging items that may be submitted for laboratory examination are essential.

The Section should have an operating manual that addresses all aspects of evidence and property management from initial intake to final disposition, including how different articles should be packaged to protect and preserve them; the storage conditions required for specialized items such as biological samples, firearms, money and valuables, flammables, and so forth; and the procedures for disposing of property by release, auction, or destruction. Rules and procedures for audits and inventories should be outlined. Emergency procedures for fires, chemical spills, severe weather, or serious injuries should be a part of the manual, as well as methods for dealing with members of the public who appear to inquire about or reclaim property, especially those who are agitated or hostile.

Complete details of many policies and procedures cannot be finalized until larger issues such as facilities, personnel, and equipment are addressed, but work could begin in areas not specifically dependent on those decisions.

4.6. Communication, Coordination, and Information Management

There are two larger issues that have an impact on property and evidence management at IMPD: communication, both within IMPD and between IMPD and other criminal justice agencies, and management of case information. Neither one of these is controlled by the Property Section but both impact the Section and its operation.

4.6.1. Communication

Communication between those who recover evidence and property, make use of it for investigation and prosecution, and have authority to determine its final disposition, and those who are responsible for storing and maintaining it throughout the process, must be improved. Police officers, prosecutors, and courts must communicate with each other so that evidence and property is neither retained beyond the time it is needed nor disposed of while cases are still active, and so that articles are disposed of properly, whether by return to an owner, destruction, forfeiture, or some other means. Police officers, Section employees, and IMCFSAs must keep each other aware of when laboratory examinations of items seized as evidence are needed; how those items must be preserved, packaged, and stored; what types of examinations are necessary, probative, or possible; how long the examinations will take; and when results are needed for investigative purposes, charging, or trial. Better communication between all parts of the criminal justice system will be a significant aid in improving evidence and property management.

One example of the need for improved communication: the Section manager should be made aware of any upcoming police operations that may result in the recovery of large amounts of material, and the management of that material should be addressed in the planning process. With advance planning, additional staff and other resources could be made available to expedite intake and storage. Another example: adequate notice of court orders for release or destruction of articles should be provided to allow sufficient time to research the case. Sometimes there is information on record, but not known to the court when the order was issued, indicating that release or destruction may not be proper or may affect another pending case.

4.6.2. Integrated Case Information Management

IMPD should implement an integrated case information management system that unites information which is currently distributed among several stand-alone systems within the Department, including case reporting, case management, photo management, WinACE, ImageWare Law Enforcement (mugshots), and TokOpen (fingerprint card and criminal record archive). The police case information system should also interface with other related systems such as the Marion County Justice Information System (JUSTIS) and perhaps IMCFSA's JusticeTrax Laboratory Information Management System. There are several vendors who might offer proposals, and advice on procurement and implementation could be sought from law enforcement agencies currently using similar systems.

This system would ideally make all case information available in a single inquiry or quick series of inquiries from a single workstation, making case research easier for initial reporting officers, investigators, prosecutors, and others who need to research cases. It should also make initial data entry faster and more efficient by eliminating duplicate entries now required for the stand-alone systems. A well designed system could also offer additional capabilities in supervisory report review, crime analysis, or statistical report generation by using all case data rather than partial data. By tying all case information together, the system also offers the potential of improving communication within and outside IMPD.

5. CONCLUSION

Improvements to evidence and property management within IMPD will not be quick or easy. Problems within the Property Section have been developing for years and have not been adequately addressed in the past, so remedying them will take time. Significant improvements in Section operation will require significant allocation of resources to facilities, personnel, equipment, and training; plus time devoted to developing comprehensive operational policies and procedures. This document does not attempt to prescribe a specific course of action in exact detail, but rather summarizes current conditions and the areas that need to be addressed to improve them.

It is not the purpose of this assessment to find fault or place blame, and none of the statements in this document should be taken in that fashion. Rather, its goal is to provide a path to improving evidence and property management within IMPD and recommendations that should be considered along the way.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would have been impossible to perform this assessment without the honest, open, and sincere cooperation of the following IMPD Property Section staff members: THERESA BOCKBRADER, STACEY KROM, TERESA DYE, DAVID McDONALD, REBECCA HARDIN, TERRY BRANCA, BREN BECK, MATT McATEE (on temporary assignment), TOMIKA SMITH, and BRANDI TAYLOR.

Additional valuable information was provided by Firearms Identification Section employees SANDY COTTEY and CAROL BULL. It was very apparent during the course of this assessment that everyone understood the importance of evidence and property control, and was intent on doing the best job possible under difficult conditions.

7. THE ASSESSOR

Director MEDLER selected Forensic Scientist DAVID ZAUNER as the IMCFSA representative for this project in mid-2012. In addition to 25 years of experience at IMCFSA as a forensic scientist specializing in latent print examination, Mr. ZAUNER was employed by the Indiana State Police (ISP) for more than seven years, immediately prior to joining IMCFSA, as the Evidence Clerk at the Fort Wayne Regional Laboratory. In that position he was responsible for evidence control for the Laboratory in addition to acting as property officer for ISP District 22 in Fort Wayne, which is co-located with the Laboratory. As the first Evidence Clerk at Fort Wayne, and only the second in the Laboratory system, Mr. ZAUNER assisted in the development of protocols that were eventually adopted throughout the ISP Laboratory system.

APPENDIX A. PROPOSED JOB DESCRIPTION

EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY CONTROL SPECIALIST

Position Summary

Employee in this position is responsible for receiving, maintaining, releasing, and disposing of articles coming into the custody of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) as evidence in criminal investigations, for safekeeping, and as found property. Articles may include firearms, controlled substances, money, valuables, and other items that require special handling and tight security. Employee is responsible for ensuring that all evidence and property is properly and securely stored while in Section facilities. Employee performs preliminary chemical testing of suspected controlled substances seized as evidence. Employee receives and distributes supplies and equipment for use within Section.

Responsibilities

- Receives evidence and property from officers, ensures all articles are accurately listed on property voucher and accounted for, ensures that articles are properly packaged and sealed as required (assisting officers if needed), enters description and transaction information into IMPD evidence and property control system (EPCS), and marks, tags, or labels articles and/or packages for identification. *(Note: generic EPCS term is used rather than WinACE as system used may change in future.)*
- In certain cases, performs preliminary chemical testing of suspected controlled substances to obtain a presumptive identification, records results, and informs the submitting officer.
- Stores evidence and property in appropriate locations and under proper conditions to preserve and protect the articles until needed, recording initial and subsequent locations in EPCS.
- Transfers items out of storage to authorized members of IMPD or other criminal justice agencies for further investigation, laboratory testing, or court; accepts returns of items for storage; and records all transactions in EPCS.
- Receives information from investigating officers, prosecutors, and other personnel as appropriate, authorizing release or other disposition of evidence and property; assists officers in authorizing disposition as needed.
- If needed, seeks to identify lawful owners of releasable articles by researching police reports and other available information, notifies owners by mail or telephone, and updates EPCS with owner information.
- Releases articles to owners or representatives upon proper authority, verifies identification of claimants and articles, obtains receipt signature and records final release in EPCS.
- Receives, researches as needed, and complies with court orders for release or disposal of evidence and property; updates information and records transactions in EPCS.
- Disposes of articles when no longer required to be held and upon proper authority, by sending to auction, biological hazard waste disposal, toxic waste disposal,

controlled substance incineration, recycling, or other means as appropriate, and records final disposition in EPCS.

- Maintains security of Section facilities by limiting access to authorized persons for authorized purposes; records information about all persons entering secured area of Section who are not Section employees and monitors such persons as needed; checks doors, gates, locks, and alarm systems as required.
- Performs periodic full or partial inventories of evidence and property held in storage to verify records and account for articles, and reports any discrepancies to Supervisor.
- Reports immediately to Supervisor any security breaches, missing evidence or property, safety hazards, injuries, or other incidents.
- Receives, records, stores, and distributes evidence packaging materials and other office supplies and equipment required for Section operation, periodically inventories supplies, and informs Supervisor so that new supplies and equipment can be ordered when needed.
- Maintains general cleanliness and order in Section facilities.
- Receives training in laws, policies, procedures, and standards concerning evidence and property control, including EPCS operation; general law enforcement operations; workplace safety, chemical and biological hazards; and preliminary chemical testing procedures for controlled substances upon hiring and periodically throughout employment.
- This list is not all-inclusive and may be expanded or modified from time to time as needs change.

Job Knowledge, Experience, and Skills Required

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Two years prior work experience preferred; experience in warehouse, shipping, inventory control, or evidence control desirable.
- Ability to lift and carry 25 to 50 pounds
- Ability to operate general office equipment
- Good communication and customer service skills and an even temperament, with ability to handle occasional hostile contacts
- Absolute integrity and trustworthiness: no felony or relevant misdemeanor convictions, pass pre-employment polygraph examination and background investigation, pass periodic polygraph examinations during term of employment, subject to random drug screening tests
- Clear driving record and ability to obtain Indiana driver's license; commercial driver's license may be required (*required to drive property truck?*)
- Ability to learn, understand, and follow laws, policies and procedures for handling evidence and property
- Ability to learn, understand, and follow laws and regulations regarding workplace safety and hazardous materials, including biological hazards, chemical hazards, flammables, and firearms
- General computer literacy, including ability to learn and use evidence and property control systems and other law enforcement information systems

- Ability to observe and record events completely and accurately, communicate orally and in writing, and prepare reports
- Ability to learn, understand, and follow procedures for preliminary chemical testing of suspected controlled substances

Independent Judgment

Actions are generally controlled by established laws, ordinances, policies, and procedures, but situations will arise that are not specifically covered; therefore, problem-solving skills and the ability to deal with unusual situations are needed. A supervisor is usually available. This position requires absolute integrity and trustworthiness and a high degree of confidentiality. This position requires careful attention to detail and strict adherence to standards. Errors could compromise criminal or civil cases and damage public confidence in IMPD and law enforcement generally.

Working Conditions

Work is performed in one or more secure storage facilities housing large and heavy containers, potentially hazardous tools and other machinery, firearms, controlled substances, biological hazards, and chemical hazards. Ladders and warehouse equipment may present hazards. Employee will periodically drive a large transport truck. Employee will interact with a variety of individuals, including officers and employees of IMPD and other law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, attorneys, court personnel, and members of the public, including crime victims and arrestees, who may occasionally be hostile. Shift work and weekend work are required. Regular, routine polygraph examinations and random drug screens are required.